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Message Text

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ACTION TRSE-00

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1092

DEPT PLS PASS TREASURY FOR A/S BERGSTEN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (BERGSTEN, C. FRED)
SUBJ: VISIT TO GABON OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TREASURY
BERGSTEN

REF: (A) LIBREVILLE 1058 (B) LIBREVILLE 1067

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TREASURY BERGSTEN'S VISIT TO LIBREVILLE WAS PRIMARILY DEVOTED TO HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS HEAD OF US DELEGATION TO AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK/FUND (AFDB/F) MEETING, HE AND HIS VISIT PROVIDED SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO ACCOMPLISHMENT OBJECTIVES THIS EMBASSY AND PROMOTION US-GABONESE BILATERAL RELATIONS. BOTH HIS AFDB/F AND HIS BILATERAL ACTIVITIES RECEIVED EXCELLENT AND FAVORABLE MEDIA COVERAGE WHICH CONTINUED WELL AFTER HIS DEPARTURE FROM LIBREVILLE. END SUMMARY.

2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY BERGSTEN VISIT HAD THREE HIGHLIGHTS WHICH GENERATED PARTICULARLY FAVORABLE PUBLICITY: A) GENERALIZED KNOWLEDGE THAT AMERICAN DELEGATION WAS ARRIVING WITH PLEDGE MADE BY PRESIDENT CARTER APRIL 1 IN LAGOS TO CONTRIBUTE $125 MILLION TO AFDF; B) A/S BERGSTEN'S SPEECH TO AFDB/F WHICH ITSELF WAS WELL RECEIVED; AND, (C) A/S BERGSTEN'S BILATERAL WITH PRESIDENT BONGO WHICH ALSO WENT
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WELL.

3. GABONESE MOMETIMES QUESTION USG COMMITMENT TO AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BECAUSE GABON RECEIVES NO BILATERAL ASSISTANCE. IT WAS PARTICULARLY USEFUL, THEREFORE, TO RECEIVE SO MUCH FAVORABLE PUBLICITY LOCALLY ON $125 MILLION REPLENISHMENT. REFERENCE

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TO IT DURING PRESIDENT BONGO'S OPENING ADDRESS WAS ONLY TIME THAT ADDRESS WAS INTERRUPTED BY APPLAUSE. LARGE PORTIONS OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY BERGSTEN'S SPEECH WERE BROADCAST WITH FAVORABLE COMMENTARY ON RADIO AND TELEVESION AS WAS VIRTUALLY HIS ENTIRE PRESS CONFERENCE.

4. ALTHOUGH WE DID NOT PLAY THE REQUEST FOR THE BILATERAL WITH PRESIDENT BONGO AS BERGSTEN AN EMISSARY FROM PRESIDENT CARTER, WE DID NOT ATTEMPT TO DISSUADE BONGO FROM THINKING SUCHWAS CASE. THIS HELPED THEREFORE TO ASSUAGE BONGO'S HURT PRIDE OVER FANCIED LACK OF HIGH LEVEL USG CONSULTATION DURING HIS TENURE AS OAU CHAIRMAN. BERSTEN WAS ABLE TO MAKE USEFUL POINTS ON OPEC PETROLEUM PRICING AND ELICITED FIRST STATEMENT WE CAN REMEMBER FROM BONGO STATING THAT HE DID NOT SUPPORT AN INCREASE PROVIDED THAT VALUE OF DOLLAR IMPROVED. BERGSTEN'S RESPONSIVENESS TO PRESIDENT BONGO'S BOEING 747 PURCHASE DILEMMA WAS MOST HELPFUL.

5. FINALLY, BONGO WAS RELAXED AND ANIMATED THROUGHOUT HIS DISCUSSION WITH A/S BERGSTEN. PART OF SUCCESS OF THAT MEETING WAS DUE TO A/S BERGSTEN'S HAVING TAKEN TIME TO GET OUT AND VISIT PRESIDENT BONGO'S SHOWPIECE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, THE TRANSGABON RAILWAY.
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TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE HE IS ONLY HEAD OF DELEGATION TO HAVE DONE SO.TIENKEN

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